



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - April 24, 2003

- ***In the West***, the latest in a series of late-season storms is arriving in the ***Pacific Coast States***, boosting soil moisture reserves but slowing fieldwork as far south as ***California's Sacramento Valley***. Meanwhile, beneficial snow showers associated with the previous storm system linger across the ***central Rockies***.
- ***On the Plains***, widespread showers continue to aid pastures, winter wheat, and spring-sown small grains from ***Kansas northward***. In contrast, topsoils remain unfavorably dry across parts of the ***southern High Plains***, despite scattered thunderstorms in recent days.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, cold weather (temperatures near or slightly below 32 degrees F) prevailed across the ***lower Great Lakes region*** for the second consecutive morning, but readings were not low enough in most locations to significantly threaten jointing winter wheat and blooming fruit trees. Meanwhile, beneficial showers are providing additional drought relief across the ***southern and western Corn Belt***.
- ***In the South***, showers and thunderstorms are slowing fieldwork and causing localized wind and hail damage, but improving soil moisture for recently planted summer crops.

Outlook: Severe thunderstorms and locally heavy rainfall will affect the ***middle Mississippi Valley and Delta*** today, as a potent storm system emerges from the ***Plains***. Farther north, beneficial rainfall is expected across the ***lower Missouri Valley and southern Corn Belt***. By week's end, rain will overspread the ***Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic States***. Meanwhile, dry weather will return to the ***Plains***, but another Pacific storm system will bring additional rain and snow to the ***Pacific Northwest, northern Rockies, and northern California***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for April 29 - May 3 calls for above-normal precipitation in the ***Great Basin, central Rockies, Plains, western Corn Belt, and southern Florida***. Meanwhile, drier-than-normal weather is expected in the ***Pacific Northwest, Rio Grande Valley, Delta, and Northeast***. Above-normal temperatures are forecast across the ***eastern half of the U.S.***, while cooler-than-normal weather is expected ***west of the Rockies***.

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